

WOMEN'S AGENDA

VOL. 3 NO. 6
July 1978

Women's Exposition 1978 Women at Work



WOMEN'S ACTION
ALLIANCE, INC.

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Cover: *Members of All-Crafts Center build a house at Women's Exposition 1978 (see page 7). Photo by Ann Chwatsky.*

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ALERT ALERT

IUD Survey: Help Needed

As of last November, any woman considering the intrauterine device (IUD) as a method of contraception must, by federal law, receive a special brochure explaining risks and benefits.

The National Women's Health Network and the Women and Health Roundtable are conducting a survey to determine whether women are, in fact, receiving the brochure prior to making a decision to use the IUD.

For copies of the questionnaire, write to Women and Health Roundtable, 2000 P St. NW, Suite 403, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Lawyers: Job Opportunities

The national office of the American Civil Liberties Union, in New York City, is looking for minority and women applicants to fill present and future openings for attorneys.

There are presently three openings, two of which are for the ACLU Women's Rights Project. Deadline for applications is July 20.

For details, write to Bruce J. Ennis, Legal Director, ACLU, 22 E. 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

Homemaking Essay Contest

Do you have any ideas about the best way for homemakers to get their economic rights? A \$3,000 award is being offered by the Edward L. Bernays Foundation for the best essay of 5,000 words or less on the subject, "Practical Program to Achieve Economic Justice for Homemakers."

Judges for the contest include Radcliffe College President Matina S. Horner and Congresswoman Margaret Heckler. The sponsor is Babson College in Massachusetts. Deadline: October 2, 1978.

For contest rules: Professor Frank C. Genovese, Administrator, Babson-Bernays Competition, Babson College, Babson Park, Mass. 02157.

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Caucus Keeps Score on 95th Congress

Ten members of the House of Representatives scored 100 percent on issues of importance to women in the first 15 months of the 95th Congress, according to the National Women's Political Caucus.

The Caucus rated the representatives according to their votes on 16 bills that, it said, "affect women in all walks of life." They included measures on day care, abortion, gay rights,

food stamps, minimum wage, part-time work and flexitime for federal employees, social security financing and full employment.

The congressional members who voted in support of all 16 key issues are: Norman Mineta, James Corman, Edward Roybal, George Brown and Parren Mitchell—from California; Frederick Richmond, Theodore Weiss and Richard Ottinger—from New

York; Robert Drinan, Massachusetts; and Louis Stokes, Ohio. All ten are Democrats.

No women representatives scored 100 percent, but several failed to do so only because of one or more absences at the time votes were taken. They are Yvonne Burke (D-Cal.), Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), Helen Meyner (D-N.J.), Shirley Chisholm (D-N.Y.) and Barbara Jordan (D-Tex.).

Twenty-four percent of the House—106 members from 31 states—scored over 80 percent. They include Patricia Schroeder (D-Col.), Martha Keys (D-Kan.), Gladys Spelman (D-Md.), Millicent Fenwick (R-N.J.) and Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.).

Twelve representatives scored less than 10 percent on the NWPC issues. They are: Bob Stump (D-Ariz.), Eldon Rudd (R-Ariz.), Robert Dornan (R-Calif.), Larry McDonald (D-Ga.), Steven Symms (R-Idaho), George Hansen (R-Idaho), Phillip Crane (R-Ill.), Robert Bauman (R-Md.), Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), John Ashbrook (R-Ohio), Mickey Edwards (R-Okla.) and Olin Teague (D-Tex.).

Copies of the chart compiled by the NWPC, showing the votes of all representatives and describing the bills on which they were scored, are available for a dollar donation. Write to the National Women's Political Caucus, 1411 K St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005.



AFSCME

A Victory for Us All: When Bill Miller used his sick leave to stay home and take care of his wife and newborn son, his employer docked his salary, claiming union-management agreements did not cover pregnancy. Missouri Local 2463 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees took up Miller's grievance and got the employer to reverse the decision.

Coalition Pushes for More Women Coal Miners

A coalition of Appalachian women's and citizens' organizations is attacking what it claims is a blatant pattern of sex discrimination in hiring by coal companies.

The Coal Employment Project has filed a complaint with the U.S. Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs against 153 coal companies and mines representing about 50 percent of the nation's coal production.

The complaint asks for a review of current practices and a new provision that coal mines throughout the country be required to hire at least one female

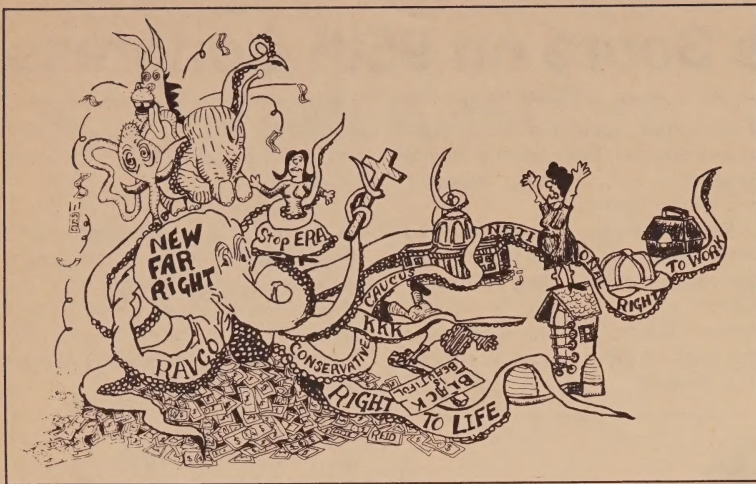
entry level coal miner for every three such males until women constitute at least 20 percent of their blue-collar work force. The Kentucky Commission for Human Rights has already been successful in forcing coal companies in that state to improve hiring practices.

A recently released Coal Employment Project study states that 99.8 percent of all persons working in the coal industry, including secretaries and file clerks, are male. The project argues that getting women jobs in the coal fields is the most effective means of

eliminating poverty among Appalachian women.

"Fortunately," said project director Betty Jean Hall, "coal is also one of the nation's largest growth industries. This presents an excellent opportunity for women and minorities to claim a larger percentage of coal mining jobs, without displacing present workers or excluding traditional applicants."

For further information: Betty Jean Hall, Director, Coal Employment Project, Box 3195, Oak Ridge, Tenn. 37830.



Women's Groups Help Create Center To Resist Far Right

More than 20 national women's organizations joined with civil liberties, church, consumer, trade union and other moderate and liberal groups at an April meeting in Washington, D.C. to exchange information and plan strategy against pressure from the radical right.

Formed as a result of the three-day meeting is the National Resource Center Against the New Right. The center has a Washington office and is already serving as a clearinghouse for information on right-wing groups. It also has a hot line for press inquiries and plans to hold a series of regional and state conference-workshops.

Midge Miller, a Wisconsin state legislator and principal organizer of the conference and the center, said in a press interview that she had become fully aware of the efficiency and financing of the far right while campaigning for the Equal Rights Amendment.

"Then I came to see that it was not just the ERA, but the Panama Canal, abortion and a lot of other issues that were going badly because of active, well-organized campaigns by the right wing," she said.

Feminist editor Gloria Steinem, who was first speaker at the conference, said that the organized right is

responsible for the violence against abortion clinics and the attempts to discredit last year's International Women's Year conference by use of

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Lawyers Can Obtain Rights Pleadings

A unique collection of pleadings from over 300 women's rights cases being litigated around the country is now available from the American Civil Liberties Union Women's Rights Project.

Lawyers or others interested in seeing how a particular issue was handled in court may write to the project for its Clearinghouse Index. The index lists subjects of litigation ranging from affirmative action to veterans preference, with cases handled either by ACLU attorneys or public interest and/or feminist law groups.

The applicant may then ask to see a digest of a particular case or cases and, if further interested, may ask for particular pleadings. All information is free of charge.

For further information: Women's Rights Project, American Civil Liberties Union, 22 East 40th St., New York, N.Y. 10016.

New Mexico Gains Sex Crimes Act, Homemakers Office

New Mexico feminists scored two major legislative victories this spring with passage of a bill creating a state office for displaced homemakers and an act to assist victims of sex crimes and promote prosecution of offenders.

The new Sexual Crimes Prosecution and Treatment Act—passed in the last six minutes of the 1978 legislative session—appropriates \$317,600 for a statewide training program for criminal justice, law enforcement and medical personnel in the proper treatment of sex crime victims. Under the act, the state Health and Environment Department will also develop strategies to prevent such crimes and will give medical and psychological aid to victims. The State Crime Laboratory is given funds for additional staff and equipment to better collect evidence for prosecution.

The act represents a victory for New Mexico women's and rape crisis groups, who have been working for its passage during the last three years with the help of a broad array of business, community and government organizations.

The Displaced Homemakers Act creates an Office for Displaced Homemakers in the state Commission on the Status of Women. The office will serve as a clearinghouse of information on services and programs available to women who need jobs but have experience mainly in homemaking. It will also offer counseling and training to programs carried on by other agencies.

The Act is a direct result of a survey conducted last year by the New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women and the YWCA of Albuquerque (See WOMEN'S AGENDA, November 1977).

For further information: Tasia Young, Executive Director, New Mexico Commission on the Status of Women, Suite 811, Plaza del Sol, 600 2nd St. NW, Albuquerque, N.M. 87102.

Older Women Are in a Triple Bind

Call for Change: Conference Cites Poverty, Neglect

Older women are in a triple bind. They were raised to be homemakers, but Social Security laws and private pension plans penalize them for not having "earned a living." If they did hold paying jobs, their wages were low, so that their Social Security payments now are minimal. If they seek work, the youth-oriented job market rejects them. Even federal manpower programs discriminate against the elderly.

These were some of the themes of a conference on *Older Women in New York City—Today and Tomorrow* held in May by the City of New York Commission on the Status of Women and the Department for the Aging.

"For the majority of women, to be old is to be poor," declared New York Commissioner for the Aging Alice M. Brophy, who is herself 68 years old.

"Although older people represent 10 percent of the total population of our country, they represent 25 percent of the poor," she said. "And the majority are women."

Median income for men over 65 in 1975 was \$4,959, according to Ms. Brophy. For women over 65 it was \$2,642. For older black women who, Ms. Brophy said, "suffer the triple jeopardy of sexism, racism and ageism," the statistics showed 81 percent in 1973 with incomes below \$2,500.

Unemployment among women aged 55 to 64 is 14 percent—almost three times as high as for men of that age—and after 65 it is eight times as high, said the commissioner. But, she charged, federal manpower programs such as CETA (the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) "have an established record of ignoring the needs of the over-55 age group."

The conference included a series of workshops covering such topics as emotional and physical health, family and living arrangements and meaning-



Kathleen Maciag

Helen Hamlin leads workshop on older women's emotional and physical health at New York City conference.

ful roles for the older woman. Although most of the participants were professionals working with older people, some were activists such as Sylvia Wexler of the Gray Panthers.

"Many older people reject themselves," said Ms. Wexler. "We try to raise their consciousnesses. Once they have a better opinion of themselves, they can begin to work for improved conditions."

Some of the improvements recommended at the conference are:

- A review of the Social Security laws to abolish regulations that now discriminate against women. Household work should be recognized as employment. Benefits should not be computed solely on the basis of earnings, since women have traditionally earned less. Regulations that now penalize wives who work outside the home should be abolished.

- A federal employment program geared especially to older people.

- A law that would require private pension funds to automatically include

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New Advocates for Women Over Forty

A new organization has been formed to spur education, research and action on the problems of older women.

Started by two women professors of gerontology, the National Action Forum for Older Women plans to establish a network and central resource exchange for educational, research and service projects for women over 40. It also hopes to bring together academics and community people working in behalf of older women, and to act as an advocate.

The Forum was begun in November 1977 at a convention of the National Gerontological Society in San Francisco. "In five days of meetings," said Jane Porcino, one of the founders, "hardly a word was said about the problems of women, although they are the majority of the elderly. Nancy King (professor at the Center on Aging of the University of Maryland) and I went around the hotel and put up signs announcing a meeting on women. We were inundated with responses, and have been ever since."

The Forum publishes a newsletter and has established an advisory board that includes Tish Sommers, coordinator of the NOW Older Women's Rights Committee, as well as leading gerontologists. It is encouraging new courses and research on elderly women in universities throughout the country, and has influenced the National Gerontological Society to make women one of the central themes at next November's meeting.

It also persuaded the society to move that meeting from New Orleans to Dallas to comply with the boycott of states not ratifying ERA, said Professor Porcino.

For further information: Jane Porcino, Health Sciences Center, School of Allied Health Professions, State University of New York, Stony Brook, N.Y. 11794.

ON THE AGENDA

This column is devoted to activities of a coalition of national women's organizations and women's caucuses or projects of national organizations, who come together around the many issues defined by the National Women's Agenda. For information on how your group can join, contact the Women's Action Alliance, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

New Member

The National Conference of Puerto Rican Women has become the 25th organization to join the National Women's Agenda Coalition. The NA-COPRW was established in 1972 to defend the rights, needs and aspirations of *puertorriquenas* as well as other women of Hispanic origin.

ERA in Illinois

The Agenda Coalition took action during the dramatic vote on the Equal Rights Amendment in Illinois this past June.

Before the first vote, an eleventh-hour appeal from the National Women's Political Caucus quickly drew the responses of 17 Coalition members, who wrote Illinois leaders from their national offices or urged their Illinois local chapters to put pressure on local political figures.

Organizations included the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists Women's Division, Association for Voluntary Sterilization Women's Caucus, Catalyst, Church Women United, Federally Employed Women, Gay Rights National Lobby Women's Caucus, Girls Clubs of America, National Association of Women Business Owners, National Committee on Household Employment, National Council on Alcoholism Office on Women, National Council of Jewish Women, Pioneer Women, Screen Actors Guild Women's Conference Committee, Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, United Auto Workers Women's Division, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, and the National Board of the YWCA.

Veterans' Preference

A major barrier to women's employment by the federal government—the nation's biggest boss with 2.8 million civilian employees—is veterans' preference.

Currently, 50 percent of government employees are vets, although they make up only 25 percent of the total civilian work force. Women compose 30 percent of government employees but more than 42 percent of the work force. Veterans hold 65 percent of high level federal jobs; women, less than 3 percent.

The present U.S. Civil Service system gives lifetime preference in hiring and promotion to veterans of all wars, a situation that works against women, minorities and veterans of more recent wars such as Viet Nam.

For Federally Employed Women, veterans' preference is a bread-and-butter issue. The organization has called upon Coalition members to support President Carter's proposed reform of the Civil Service that includes provisions for improving opportunities for women while protecting the rights of Viet Nam era and all disabled veterans.

To date, six organizations have written to the chairs of the House and Senate committees considering the legislative package. Further response by women's groups is essential to counteract pressures from a strong veterans' lobby.

Support for YWCA Grant

New affirmative action standards set by the federal government greatly improve the opportunity for women to get jobs in federally funded construction programs. (See WOMEN'S AGENDA, March 1978.)

The National Board of the YWCA has applied for a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor to expand and develop its local network for putting women in touch with available jobs, the skills needed and how to apply. The grant would also help the YWCA

establish a national registry of women who want to enter the skilled trades or construction.

Following an appeal from the Y in late May, seven Coalition members so far have written to the Secretary of Labor in support of the grant proposal.

Energy Appointment

The Tennessee Valley Authority is the largest public power organization and the most powerful supplier of energy in the United States. President Carter is searching for two people to fill vacancies on the TVA's three-member board of directors. Various labor, business and other interest groups have nominated candidates.

The American Association of University Women has asked Coalition members to support a women's community candidate, Agnes Thornton Bird, an attorney and chair of the Tennessee Commission on the Status of Women. As we went to press, eight groups had written to the White House personnel director.

New Resource

A taped presentation on respect for the individual, originally prepared for the National Women's Agenda Coalition Conference last March by the National Gay Task Force Women's Caucus and the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, is now available. It focuses on the constricting effect of institutionalized religion and sex roles on our image of ourselves. The tape may be ordered for rental through the Pacifica Program Service, 5316 Venice Blvd., Los Angeles, Calif. 90019.

A Victory For Us All

The Kentucky Bowling Proprietors Association recently conducted an advertising campaign that included billboards bearing the slogan, "Beat your wife—go bowling." The Kentucky Women's Agenda Coalition protested and, for a token payment, got equal time and space to put across its own message: "Wife beating is no laughing matter."



An attentive audience views slide presentation at workshop on closing the gap between corporate intent and affirmative action results. Photo by Linda Ferrer Rogers.



New York Lt. Governor Mary Anne Krupsak at opening ceremonies. She called upon the Chief Executive Officers of corporations to form a CEO for the ERA committee.



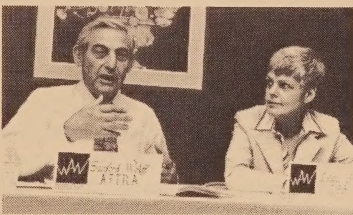
Lynn Salvage, president of the First Women's Bank of New York (center), hosted a reception. Photo by Linda Ferrer Rogers.

ALLIANCE EXPOSITION 1978 WOMEN AND CORPORATIONS FACE TO FACE

They came to meet each other face to face, many for the first time. They included representatives of women's organizations from all over the country and executive officers of several of the largest corporations and foundations. Some came with misgivings about just how much they could say to each other—but all were willing to start a dialogue.

After all, there was a lot at stake. Gloria Steinem summed up the problem in her opening remarks. "For years, we've been hearing two things: first, from the women's groups who say they can't get enough money from corporations and foundations—and then from corporations and foundations who say they never get enough good proposals from us. . . . So this is a very important gathering. We can do today what we cannot do in months and months of appointments."

The Women's Action Alliance conceived the idea of bringing together the corporate, foundation and women's communities around a theme of common concern: women at work. It then interested 38 corporations and 7 foundations in giving the financial support for two days of exhibits, workshops and informal receptions. Over 1,500 men and women attended Women's Exposition 1978 at New York's Roosevelt Hotel, May 23 and 24.



All That Glitters: Sanford Wolff (left) of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists presents the union view of sex discrimination in the electronic media, while Lolita Shalleck of CBS looks on. Photo by Ellie Thompson.

Sheila Lumis of Xerox (standing) gives tips on how to raise money from corporations. Jaynie Goldstein of Scott Paper also spoke. Some workshop participants took copious notes; others later complained that corporate grants shouldn't be based on well-typed proposals. Photo by Ellie Thompson.



"The resources of the women's community are just fabulous, and most people don't even know it," Ruth Abram, executive director of the Alliance, told the first-day crowd. "We hope corporations will see women's groups as resources to be tapped, and we can help steer them to the right place."

Alliance Is Broker

The Alliance acted as broker. But it was up to the individual participants to make the lasting connections. One lively meeting place was a large hall housing the booths of over 50 national women's organizations and over 30 local New York projects. Veterans of the National Women's Conference dubbed it a "little Houston." The Alliance intended it to serve as a visual directory of women's programs.

Another opportunity to exchange ideas was provided by three dozen workshops on issues including day care, pregnancy, flexible work schedules, women returning to work, women-owned businesses, the role of secretaries, and women in so-called nontraditional jobs. In each workshop, managers from corporations and foundations and women activists described their programs and candidly discussed mutual problems and concerns.

continued



Coy Eklund, president of the Equitable Life Assurance Society, greets Gloria Lopez and Sylvia Bagan of the Mexican American Women's National Association at the Equitable reception. Photo by Ellie Thompson.



Dorothea Hopfer of the National Council of Women of the U.S. (right) with Natalie Gulbrandsen, president of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, at breakfast sponsored by Women in Foundations. Photo by Ellie Thompson.



The All-Nations Women's League booth featured the crafts of its multinational members. At center is President Elisa Sanchez. Photo by Ellie Thompson.



Chee Chee Williams of WABC-TV inspecting construction site of house All-Crafts Women built, while their children inspect the reporter. Photo by Ellie Thompson.

Playing Fair

In a workshop on implementing laws that govern sex discrimination entitled "Playing Fair," two insurance executives recounted their companies' efforts to provide equal employment opportunities.

The Fireman's Fund Insurance Company offers all women employees a voluntary career planning seminar that includes assertiveness training and role playing of discriminatory situations they might encounter on the job. It also offers them a career information network. Managers and supervisors—mostly white males—are required to take seminars in sensitivity training. Twelve thousand have already participated.

The Equitable Life Assurance Society also requires sensitivity training, from top management down. Equitable reviews its affirmative action goals quarterly, department by department, and a women's advisory council meets regularly with the president of the company to discuss problems.

At the same workshop, Ellen Cassidy of Nine to Five, an organization of office workers, told how her group has persuaded Boston industries that treating women and minorities



Dorothy Height, president of the National Council of Negro Women (right), sharing information with Martha Edens of Church Women United at reception sponsored by the First Women's Bank of New York. Photo by Ellie Thompson.

Women's Action Alliance staff selling umbrellas that read "Failure is impossible." Photo by Ellie Thompson.



equally is good business. "Even the threat of action will get results," she said. "Last month we handed out a wage survey at insurance companies. Next day, two of them gave raises."

Tellers Tell All

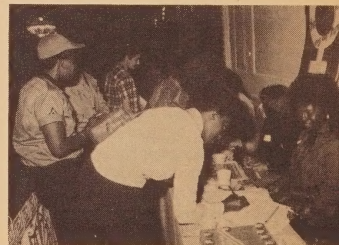
A cluster of men from the Bowery Savings Bank of New York sat in a workshop on women in banking entitled "Tellers Tell All." They listened to a report on how the Crocker Bank of California had revamped its personnel system to conform to equal employment requirements. Then they heard about a survey showing that, although women are the majority of bank employees, they are over 80 percent of the clerical workers and over 90 percent of the tellers. Afterward, a reporter from the *Los Angeles Times* asked the Bowery men why so many of them were present. "Because the management wanted us to be here," one replied.

"You can't legislate attitudes," a woman in that same workshop had argued. A representative from the Treasury Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance agreed, but added that "Ninety percent of the banks wouldn't be doing anything without a push."

continued



Patterns of Sex Discrimination: Copanelists, from left, were moderator Ruth Licht, N.Y.C. Commission on the Status of Women; Carol Parr, WEAL Legal Defense and Education Fund; Priscilla B. Ransohoff, Federally Employed Women and the U.S. Army; Diane E. Wilson, AT&T; and Evelyn Frankford, National Association of Social Workers. Photo by Ann Chwatsky.



Signing up for action with Women's Survival Space, a battered women's shelter and one of the many local New York projects on display. Photo by Linda Ferrer Rogers.

Theme of workshops and displays is Women at Work



Roosevelt Hotel maintenance men look on as women from the All-Craft Center construct staircase for the small house they built, complete with plumbing and electricity, in the hotel lobby. Photo by Ellie Thompson.



Early visitors to the Exposition Hall at booths of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation, Wider Opportunities for Women, NOW, Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Women in Transition, National Council of Career Women, Women's Institute for Freedom of the Press, National Council on Alcoholism Office on Women, Girls Clubs of America, Feminist Press and the Mexican American Women's National Association. Photo by Ellie Thompson.

Organizing from Within

The importance of top management taking the initiative was reiterated in a workshop on forming a women's group in the workplace. Women who had successfully organized such a group at the Port Authority of New York, at NBC and at the Equitable Life Assurance Society all agreed that the support of the men—and the few women—at the top can make a big difference in accomplishing affirmative action goals.

Are any of you here on company time? the women were asked. Two answered yes, the third that she worked flexible hours but would probably have to make up the time. "My boss thought it was a great idea," said Sue Gottesman of the Port Authority. "But in the past, it wouldn't have been as easy."

Career Advice

In discussing the role that counseling plays in career and vocational choices, two participants came to the same conclusions from quite different perspectives. W. Antoinette Ford is a former oceanographer and White House Fellow, now directing career planning and managerial recruitment at the General Motors Corporation. Her two principles for success are: high risk means high reward, and make no small plans—shoot high.

Mary Garvin, who started out as a fine arts major, is now one of the few

women members of a New York carpenters' union and director of a new nonprofit project to train and place women in apprenticeships. "My counselors were the male construction workers at the bar on Thursday nights," she said. Her advice: "Wherever you are and wherever you want to be is okay for women."

Broad Cross-section

Among the other workshop participants were Mobil Oil, the Federation of Organizations for Professional Women, Church Women United, Texaco, Connecticut General, the Carnegie Corporation, National Council of Jewish Women, Stride Rite shoe company's Children's Center, Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, ACLU Women's Rights Project, Morgan Guaranty Trust, Association of Junior Leagues, Catalyst, Bristol-Myers, Playboy Foundation, Pfizer, Federally Employed Women, National Association of Social Workers, AT&T, Ford Foundation, and many others.

Informal Fund Raising

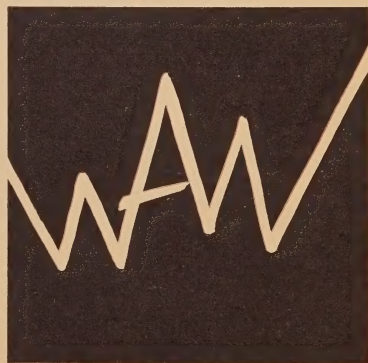
Three receptions gave women's groups the opportunity to practice some of the advice offered at how-to workshops on such subjects as raising money from corporations and foundations. They were sponsored by the Equitable Life Assurance Society, the First Women's Bank of New York and

Women in Foundations.

"Oh, my God," said a woman as she entered one cocktail party, "this is a roomful of people I've written to who have never answered my letters."

Just how much she and the other women's groups represented were able to accomplish will be seen in the year or years to come. But considering that foundations give less than one percent of grants annually to women's programs, and that corporations give 2 percent, the only direction worth looking is up.

For a full report on Women's Exposition 1978, write to Donna Meade, Women's Action Alliance, 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.



A School for Grassroots Politicians

A college-based program teaches women such skills as lobbying, campaigning and public relations.

by Kathleen Maciag

"Politics—it's such a nasty, dirty word." It may seem like a contradiction for a woman who is a professor of political science, director of a political training center and an activist to say such a thing, but for Jewel Bellush, politics is much more.

Convinced of the need for a school that could offer training in political skills for all types of women, Dr. Bellush founded the Women's Center for Community Leadership in 1976. Operating through Hunter College of the City University of New York, the Center concerns itself with educating women in the political process. "We focus on grassroots politics," says Director Bellush, "since that is what immediately affects the women attending our workshops."

Recently, a group of New York women intent on influencing their state legislators made a trip to Albany, the capital. "The trip was sponsored by a women's lobby group," explained Alexandra Matusinka, a student intern at the WCCL, "and although that organization gave us tips during the ride up, it couldn't possibly tell us all we needed to know." Members of the group implemented their briefing with techniques they had learned in a WCCL workshop to successfully lobby several state representatives on issues such as abortion and day care.

The Center itself does not take a stand on issues. "We can't afford to,"

"I'll be ready to close our doors when women are fully in power." —Bellush

Dr. Bellush explains. "We have to be unbiased to be respected."

The WCCL was awarded a grant of \$15,000 this past year from the Rockefeller Family Fund, which recognized the need for a college-linked training institute. That grant has helped provide salaries for professional staff members. A small fee for workshops generates additional income. The Center also publishes a monthly newsletter, produced by Hunter students who earn academic credit for their work.

According to Dr. Bellush, the cooperation of the college has helped the Center to succeed. "New ideas require someone pushing them, and usually there's a money tag involved," she says. The college, with the approval of its president, Jacqueline Wexler, the only woman president in the City University system, takes care of the basic life-support functions.

The women attending sessions in communication skills, public policy, lobbying, campaign techniques and self-advocacy generally range in age from their late twenties to sixties. "Most have a vague notion about politics and come here for an overview," says Ms. Matusinka. "They are women who have been active but who haven't put their skills together," Dr. Bellush adds.

A recent workshop consisted of four sessions in skills training for campaigns and state elections. Taught by the legislative director for the state senate minority leader, the course covered campaign organization, communication and public relations, and the primary process. The framework was how to relate these skills to a career. It seems that many women come to the Center with political skills that they don't realize are marketable.

"We use politics as a route to ca-



Ann Chwatsky

Jewel Bellush, founder and director of the Women's Center for Community Leadership in New York City.

reers and voluntarism as a stepping stone," Dr. Bellush explains. "We've noticed a very positive feeling among women about paying something to attend the workshops. It makes you feel good to know you're paying a woman to be a professional."

"Our programs are not unique," she continues, "but we try to teach skills that can be used constantly." Center staff also work in cooperation with other organizations, foundations and institutions to sponsor all-day conferences geared toward specific constituencies.

Whatever the topic or the approach, the main objective of the Center is to keep up a momentum. "The key to equality is power," Dr. Bellush insists. "I'll be ready to close our doors when women are fully in power."

Kathleen Maciag, a recent graduate of Hunter College, was an editorial intern for Women's Agenda. For more information: Women's Center for Community Leadership, Hunter College, 790 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y. 10021, (212) 570-5053.

Calendar

July

Meetings held in July include the National Training Conference of Federally Employed Women in Denver, Colorado, July 12-16; and the Annual Convention of the National Federation of Business and Professional Women's Clubs in San Juan, Puerto Rico, July 23-27.

For details, see the June WOMEN'S AGENDA.

August 27-30

Fourth National Victim Services Conference, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Will include workshops on battered women, sexual assault and child abuse, with many speakers from rape crisis centers and women's programs against domestic violence. Among those taking part: Women's Advocates of St. Paul, Minnesota; Women in Crisis, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Coalition for Alternatives to Domestic Violence, Riverside, California.

The conference is cosponsored by the Correctional Services of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and the National Organization of Victim Assistance.

Registration before August 1, \$25; after August 1, \$30. Housing available at minimal cost.

For more information: Fourth National Victim Services Conference, Correctional Services of Minnesota, 1427 Washington Ave. South, Minneapolis, Minn. 55454, (612) 339-7227 or toll free: 800-328-4737.

August 27-September 1

Annual Assembly, Leadership Conference of Women Religious, Cleveland, Ohio.

This is the first time that the LCWR will meet jointly with the Conference of Major Superiors of Men. The subject is Convergence with the Third World, and major speakers include Catholic churchwomen from the Philippines, Colombia and India. Empha-

sis is on developing strategies for change.

For more information: Leadership Conference of Women Religious, 1302 18th St. NW, Suite 701, Washington, D.C. 20036, (202) 293-1483.

September 16

Women and Money '78: Financial Planning for Everywoman, all-day conference sponsored by the Human Relations Center of the New School for Social Research, New York City.

A follow-up to the 1977 conference. (See WOMEN'S AGENDA, December 1977.) Cosponsors this year include the New York City Commission on the Status of Women, the Women's Bureau of the U.S. Department of Labor, the downtown Women's Center of the National Council of Negro Women, the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Small Business Administration and the United Nations Office of Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs.

The focus of nine mini-courses is on providing basic information and resources about short-range and long-term financial planning. Cost, including materials and lunch, is \$10.

For more information: Human Relations Center of the New School for Social Research, 66 West 12th St., New York, N.Y. 10011.

September 24-27

56th Annual Convention, National Association of Bank Women, Las Vegas, Nevada.

Theme of the convention is The Winning Game/Strategies for a Competitive Era. Speakers include Major General Jeanne Holm, USAF (retired), and Hank E. Koehn, vice president in charge of the Futures Research Unit of the Security Pacific Bank of California.

For further information: National Association of Bank Women, Inc., 111 East Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. 60601.

This convention is being held in an unrattified state.

Far Right *continued from page 4*

such inflammatory tactics as inserting lesbian sexual drawings into IWY literature. NOW president Eleanor Smeal and Joyce Hamlin of the Women's Division of the United Methodist Church also described their experiences with right-wing attacks on equal rights.

Some of the other issues influenced by the radical right were identified as consumer protection legislation—which was recently defeated in the House—spending on social programs, gun control and arms limitation.

The major far right groups, according to the center, are: the Public Service Research Council, Americans Against Union Control of Government, National Right to Work Committee and Foundation, Conservative Caucus, National Conservative Political Action Committee, Heritage Foundation, American Conservative Union and Victory Fund, Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, American Legislative Exchange Council and the John Birch Society.

Many of these are said to be raising millions of dollars with the help of computerized direct-mail lists and influencing public policy through sophisticated lobbying and advertising techniques. Right-wing money, says the center, has put three unknown conservatives into Congress through special elections held in the last two years.

Other women's organizations that attended the conference include the American Association of University Women, Church Women United, Coalition of Labor Union Women, ERAmerica, League of Women Voters, National Abortion Rights Action League, National Council of Jewish Women, National Women's Education Fund, National Women's Political Caucus, Women in Communications and the Women's Campaign Fund.

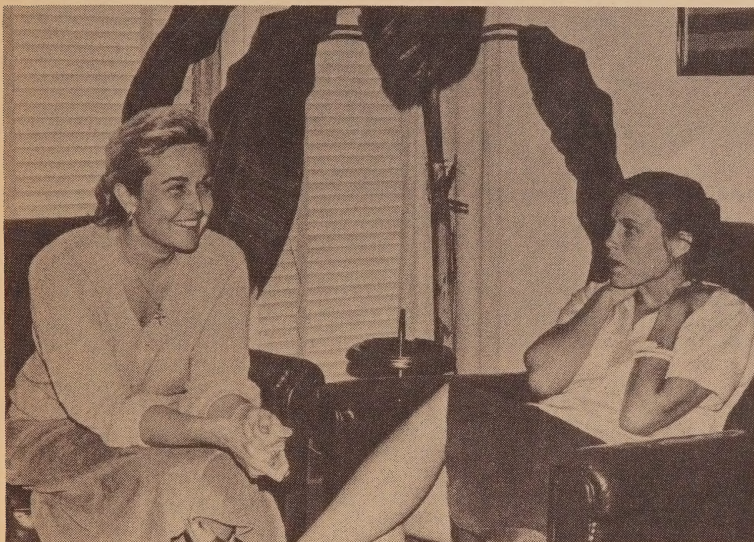
For further information: National Resource Center Against the New Right, 2027 Massachusetts Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.

REMINDER

WOMEN'S AGENDA does not publish in August. Coming up Labor Day: Women and Work.

A Career in the Foreign Service

The U.S. Department of State is making a concerted effort to recruit women FSOs.



Janet Clogston

Melissa Wells, U.S. Representative to the United Nations Economic and Social Council, with Monica Ladd, a member of the U.S. Mission to the U.N. Ambassador Wells has been a Foreign Service officer since 1959.

by Vera Mihaic

Opportunities in the Foreign Service for women who want a career that takes them around the world have never been greater. According to an information officer at the U.S. Department of State, a concerted effort is being made to recruit women Foreign Service officers.

Looking at the current status of women, the situation can only improve. As of December 31, 1977, about 9.6 percent or 337 of the 3,514 FSOs were women. This would seem to be an increase over 1974, when women constituted 8 percent or 286 of the 3,412 FSOs.

"But the figures are misleading," says Fran P. Hosken, editor of the international women's rights newsletter, *WIN News*. "Combining overseas and U.S. women Foreign Service officers, we actually see a 1.1 percent decrease at the junior level between 1975 and

1976. The junior level is the entry level. At this rate of decrease, in 20 years the Foreign Service would have no women in junior level positions."

Why has the percentage of women entering the Foreign Service dropped? Ambassador Melissa Wells, who has been an FSO since 1959, feels that younger women especially may be turned off by the stereotype of stiff blue uniforms and elaborate etiquette. Also, candidates who take the written entrance examination and fail it, as many do, may become discouraged. Of 3,742 women who took the exam last December, 694 or 18.5 percent passed.

Ms. Wells urges them to persevere, using her own experience as an example. "I failed the exam the first time," she recalls, "but I promised myself that I would keep on taking it until I passed."

The State Department claims that it has systematically reviewed and updated policies to improve career opportunities for women. "It's up to women now to take advantage of that," Fran Hosken believes. "If we are to achieve world peace, more women must enter the Foreign Service. Women are brought up to compromise. They have all the qualities needed to negotiate in international affairs."

Many of the candidates for the last Foreign Service exam, which is given once a year in several locations across the country, may have agreed with Ms. Hosken that women are the key to world peace. Mitzi Scott, a 21-year-old senior at Hunter College of the City University of New York, reported that the room in which she took the exam was filled mostly with young women. Ms. Scott was encouraged by her political science professor, who had himself been a Foreign Service officer. Although she failed the exam, she is planning to take it again this year.

According to the State Department, as a result of a policy on nondiscrimination in assignments, women FSOs are ensured the chance to be considered for positions in all of the Service's diversified functions. Career women have recently been in charge of U.S. embassies and consulates in Africa, Canada, France, Italy, the Philippines and West Germany. They have also served as deputy chiefs of mission in Africa, Algeria, the Bahamas and Bulgaria.

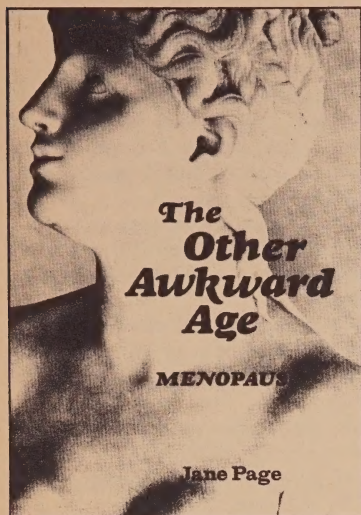
In Washington, D.C., women FSOs are assigned to roles such as director general of the Foreign Service, executive director of the Bureau of European Affairs, and senior deputy examiner on the Board of Examiners.

"Lack of roots is essential to making it in the Foreign Service," Melissa Wells warns. "You have to be a gypsy and have a sense of adventure. It's not exactly a Pan Am two-week vacation."

A former ambassador to Guinea

continued on page 15

NEW RESOURCES



The Other Awkward Age: Menopause, by Jane Page. Berkeley: Ten Speed Press, 1977. \$8.95 hardcover, \$4.95 paperback.

In spite of its negative title, *The Other Awkward Age: Menopause*, by Jane Page, contains much information of positive value to women of all ages, since each of us can either anticipate or evaluate the experience of the middle years of life.

The chief definition of "awkward" is "ungainly, clumsy, unskillful"—which does not seem applicable to women going through menopause. A subsidiary definition of "causing embarrassment" might apply to the woman going through hot flashes at inconvenient times, but the book itself states that half the women in menopause have few, if any, troublesome symptoms.

The book is a product of the efforts of many women associated with Women in Midstream, a group at the University of Washington YWCA in Seattle. A questionnaire on the menopause was distributed and evaluated by the group, and is included in the appendix.

Following chapters on physician relationships, hormone therapy and surgery, there is material on good general health practices: exercise, diet and re-

laxation.

The book deplores the fact that little research has been done in the area of menopause, and the author wonders if there isn't sexism in this neglect, quoting a physician who said: "You must remember, women don't die of menopause."

Doctors taken to task

Doctors are taken to task for ineptness in dealing with menopausal and other gynecological patients. The description of the usual examination is all too familiar to most of us.

The chapter explaining menopause makes clear exactly what happens to the body at that time. Women are reassured that those who do have some problems need not anticipate all the symptoms sometimes associated with menopause. The author feels that "hot flushes" is a better description of that phenomenon than "hot flashes." More lasting physical effects of diminished estrogen production are also discussed. No doubt, as the author says, many women will find their problems subsiding as the body adjusts to its new hormonal balance, but lifetime health and emotional patterns may need changing.

The chapters on hormone therapy are important, and the questions raised may help women to make decisions about undergoing treatment. Differing medical opinions on whether estrogens cause cancer are explored. Since much of the research on hormone treatment has been subsidized by drug companies that sell hormones, Ms. Page urges consumers to demand objective studies.

The author answers the chapter heading, "What Can Women Do for Themselves?" with specific instructions on exercise, which should be useful. Since there is much recent writing and research on nutrition, vitamins and cholesterol, the material in this book should be augmented by further reading and investigation on the part of the reader—particularly regarding the effects of processed foods,

sugar consumption and excess salt. Additional investigation into holistic medicine—taking responsibility for oneself in terms of emotional attitudes, physical practices and nutrition—would seem to have potential for improving the menopausal years.

Through the book you are able to listen in on conversations about sexuality after menopause, and the experiences are varied. A virtue of the book, in fact, is our sense of its being taken from life that comes through in reading personal accounts by women.

The appendix includes suggested readings, a glossary of terms and a bibliography.

A quote from Doris Lessing

Doris Lessing is quoted as saying, "Growing old is really extraordinarily interesting." This upbeat observation might be copied and stuck in the mirror of every older woman. Those women whose verbatim statements are given in the book represent a healthy attitude toward growing older. To their testimony should be added the sense of being alive and involved in life gained by taking part in the struggle for human rights for women, including older women.

—Mary Lou Thompson

The Other Awkward Age may be ordered in paperback directly from Women in Midstream, University of Washington YWCA, 4224 University Way NE, Seattle, Wash. 98105. Send \$5.45, which includes postage and handling.

Mary Lou Thompson, author of this review, is the former Associate Director of the Unitarian Universalist Women's Federation. Now retired and living in Santa Barbara, California, she acts as an advocate on behalf of the UUWF for legislation affecting older women. She is editor of *Voices of the New Feminism* (Beacon Press, Revised 1975), available through the UUWF.

In 1976, Unitarian Universalist women successfully brought before their denomination's governing body a resolution on older women.

For copies of the resolution and for more information on their programs, write to the UUWF, 25 Beacon St., Boston, Mass. 02108.



Janet Clogston

Treat yourself to an upbeat message for gray days, and help keep the Women's Action Alliance out of the rain. Oversize umbrella printed with Susan B. Anthony's memorable words: Failure is impossible. Brown lettering on beige umbrella with wooden handle; one hundred percent nylon. Only \$10, plus \$1 for postage and handling. Two for \$19, plus \$2 for postage and handling. Inquire about bulk rates for group fundraising. Write: Dept. U, Women's Action Alliance, Inc., 370 Lexington Ave., New York, N.Y. 10017.

New Self-Help Course Offers Women Advice on Avoiding Drinking Problems

A self-help course for groups of women who want to learn how to avoid alcohol abuse is now available from the National Center for Alcohol Education, a federal agency.

Reflections in a Glass explores the stigmas and double standards related to women's drinking patterns. The course is designed for presentation in eight sessions of approximately 1½ hours in length to small groups of women, by a facilitator who need not have specialized training in alcohol work or in education.

The complete course kit contains a detailed facilitator's handbook, outline cards for each session, overhead projector transparencies, exercises and take-home summaries. Forms for ordering three films used in conjunction with the course are also provided. All materials are free of charge.

The eight sessions, which are aimed

at adults without identified drinking problems, cover physiological and psychological effects of alcohol, social drinking, family influences, mixing drinks and other drugs, and alcohol in the context of women's historical and contemporary roles. Danger signals and poor drinking habits are included.

Reflections in a Glass is one of three courses developed by the NCAE for use by community groups. The other courses are for parents of young children and for blacks. Because there is a limited supply of each kit, groups must apply for them through their state Alcoholism Authority or directly through the NCAE, 1601 North Kent St., Arlington, Va. 22209. The kits are available for one-time or permanent use, depending upon an organization's ability to distribute them to local groups.

Older Women continued from page 5
the spouse of an employee as a beneficiary.

- Increased opportunities for older women to become eligible for supplemental Social Security benefits, food stamps and Medicaid.

- Expansion of Medicaid benefits to include prescription drugs, hearing aids, eyeglasses, dental care and podiatry.

- A shift in existing Medicare allocations so that the preponderance is given to programs that allow older people to remain in their homes rather than go to institutions. Three-quarters of the nearly 1.3 million institutionalized older people in 1975 were women.

For further information: City of New York Commission on the Status of Women, 250 Broadway, Room 1412, New York, N.Y. 10007, (212) 566-3830.

Foreign Service continued from page 13

Bisseau and Cape Verde, Africa, Ms. Wells recalls that within 20 months she was transferred from the United States to Brazil to Africa and back to the United States. She still holds the title of Ambassador and is currently serving as U.S. Representative on the Economic and Social Council at the U.N.

Despite the moving around, Ms. Wells feels that a family and a career in the Foreign Service can easily be combined. "My family has been supportive, and that has been an asset," she says. With each move, Ms. Wells' husband and two children have traveled with her.

"The key to a successful Foreign Service career," Ms. Wells concludes, "is not in writing a learned dispatch, but in having a positive attitude and personality."

The Foreign Service written examination is given every December. Those who pass it must then take an oral exam. Information booklets and application forms are available beginning July of each year. For more information, write to the Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service, Box 9317 Rosslyn Station, Arlington, Va. 22209.

Vera Mihaic, editorial int Women's Agenda, is planning Foreign Service exam this f

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A New Resource on Educational Equity

A resource for people working toward equality for women in education is the recently-established Women's Educational Equity Communications Network (WEECN) in San Francisco.

Started in 1977 under a grant from the federal Women's Education Equity Act, WEECN is a comprehensive nationwide information service set up to further equal opportunity for women at all levels of educational life. It offers extensive collections and lists of materials on women's educational equity not available elsewhere, as well as a networking service for individuals and groups working in the area.

WEECN will answer mail and telephone requests for information, and make referrals to other sources. It also publishes bibliographies, newsbriefs and other information guides, and presents conference and workshop programs.

Information available includes legal and economic developments that affect women's educational opportunity; current projects on nonsexist educational materials; and data on improved opportunities in vocational and career education, physical education, educational administration, guidance and counseling, and preservice and inservice training.

For further information: Sharon Taylor, Women's Educational Equity Communications Network, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 565-3032 or 565-3000.

RESOURCES FOR ACTION

Women's Agenda has published a series of special subject issues on eleven areas of national life in which women are working for equality.

Each issue points up the major concerns of women, outlines the problems, zeroes in on groups already working in the field and tells how they organize. Many detail fund-raising techniques. Each also includes two pages of resources: groups and publications that can be of help.

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